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DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
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MINERALS PROGRAM
FILE COPY

September 24, 1991

TO: Minerals File

FROM: Holland Shepherd, Senior Reclamation Specialist *HWS*

RE: Site Inspection and Site Meeting, Radium King Mine, M/037/007, San Juan County, Utah

Date of Inspection: September 24, 1991

Time of Inspection: 11:30 a.m. - 2:30 p.m.

Conditions: Sunny, warm

Participants: Carl Dixon, Joe D. Bierschied, Atlas Minerals; Ted McDougal, Bob Turrey, BLM; Tony Gallegos, Holland Shepherd, DOGM

Purpose: To evaluate current disturbance at the Radium King and determine the adequacy of the existing reclamation surety.

The surety at the Radium King was worked up three years ago, in 1989 with a value of \$13,000. This surety was recently submitted to the Division in the form of a Certificate of Deposit by Mr. Joe D. Bierschied.

This particular site was partially reclaimed about three years ago by Atlas Minerals and Mr. Bierschied, in the hope of reducing the bond and turning this site into a small mine operation (5 acres or less). The Division has since changed its 5 acre policy; the option of changing this site to a Small Mine site is no longer available.

Members of the BLM staff were on site to discuss the reclamation surety and reclamation with us. Because the site is on BLM lands, the BLM is interested in the reclamation of this site and the amount of surety that will be held in this regard. However, the BLM cannot require a surety at this site because the mine disturbance is pre-law (FLPMA). However, the BLM has made a recommendation to the Division, that a \$20,000 bond be established for this site.

It was determined during this meeting that a portion of the mine site labeled the West Channel area, where two portals exist and some pad and road disturbance was pre-1975, therefore pre-act, the operator will not be expected to reclaim these areas. The operator did indicate during this meeting, that the portals might be sealed up as a measure of good faith. This would remove about 4 or 5 acres from the original surety estimate that was generated in 1989 and the one that was recently made just last month 1991, by the BLM.

The area where the bunkhouses and office buildings were located has been partially reclaimed. All the buildings were removed in 1989 and the site regraded, but not reseeded. Another area of the site is associated with the waste dump on the northwestern edge of the site. This dump was also regraded in 1989 but not reseeded. Half the dump was left unreclaimed and remains in small, ungraded mounds, along with a lot of mining debris, metal, etc. The area consists of 2 or maybe 3 acres. It also involves a large portal or decline that has collapsed back about 90 feet, leaving behind a large trench pit that will have to be backfilled and mounded.

Another portion of the site that we inspected was located at the eastern end of the site where an access road winds up to two portals and some old buildings. The furthestmost portal up this road, was not worked post 1975 and therefore, would not be considered part of the operators obligation to reclaim. However, the pad associated with it, in an area that was an old water tank area, was used and the access road was used by the operator. We indicated to the operator that if the portal were reclaimed alone, that the road and pad would not have to be reclaimed since the portal is the safety hazard on site and the other portions of this area do not pose public hazard. The portal is partially collapsed about 20 feet back into the mountain side.

Downhill from the road of the furthestmost portal is found another portal that has been boarded up and contains the remnants of an old mine shack. This area was used post act and therefore, would have to be reclaimed. Mr. Bierschied indicated that he was not ready to reclaim this area at this time. The bond would have to cover this portion of the site, the access road, the portal, and the shack. Also found in this area is an old mine waste dump that will have to be reclaimed.

Mr. Bierschied indicated to us that he is not ready to reclaim the large portal found on the western waste dump area (the one that had collapsed in about 90 feet). Mr. Bierschied hopes to leave the portals on the site open for possible future uranium extraction or selling to a future buyer.

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We also inspected a portion of the site that is labeled the Lagoon area; this is the sewage lagoon. Several small excavations were made by the operator and used for awhile for a sewage lagoon. A sewage pipe runs from the old bunk house area to the lagoon and is bermed up on the side of the access road. The berms associated with the lagoon area would have to be regraded and the berm which now covers the sewage pipe would have to be regraded and the sewage pipe taken out and buried. The BLM indicated that they were interested in having these features removed from the mine site.

We indicated to Mr. Dixon, Mr. Bierschied and the BLM staff members that we would work up a new surety based on new information for this particular site. We would establish a dollar value in 1996 dollars and resubmit that. The operator would then be expected to come up with the amount of money required by the surety or reclaim portions of the mine site such that the surety could be reduced down to a tolerable level for the operator.

All of the areas disturbed at this mine site have not been seeded yet. The revegetation will entail scarifying, mulching, fertilizing and then seeding. On some portions of the site, reseeding will probably be successful in part. Other portions of the site where the waste dumps were located, because of the low soil values associated with the waste dumps, will probably be extremely difficult to revegetate. Attempts to seed these areas may be futile and it is questionable whether the Division would ask the operator to even attempt revegetation on these portions of the site. Past experiences on sites with similar materials and climatic conditions have proven unsuccessful in regard to revegetation. If seeding were eliminated from the area where the waste dumps were located, this would incorporate an area of about 9-10 acres in size. The regrading and hydraulic control would still be expected on these areas. Areas that do not involve waste dump would be expected to be mulched, fertilized and seeded.

The operator should be notified as soon as possible regarding any new surety estimate the Division works up. The issue of approving the mine transfer and surety for this site has been pending for about the last two years in a row.

jb
cc: Carl Dixon, Atlas
Joe D. Bierschied, Operator
Ted McDougal, BLM
Wayne Hedberg, DOGM